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whippersnapper. I think this bill will be improved by the addition of Senator Hilgert's amendment. I'm not going to go into a long dissertation on family values or those things that usually are discussed when people are running for office, but this certainly fits into that category because it allows a mother to spend one year with her child. When the hospitals were going to boot a woman out and her baby out of the hospital in a day or less there was outrage expressed all over the country--that's terrible, it's unconscionable, it's horrific, it ought not to be done--and it was changed. Well, in another way this that we're talking about, if we reject Senator Hilgert's amendment, is worse even than that. Twelve weeks is not a great amount of time for a mother to have with her child. I don't think 12 months is long enough, but at a minimum it should be 12 months. I intend to support this amendment. It probably will be the only one that I will support on this bill. And while I'm about it...no, I'll save that for another bill because it doesn't relate to this one, but I definitely intend to support Senator Hilgert's amendment.

SENATOR CROSBY: Thank you, Senator Chambers. (Visitors introduced.) Further discussion of the Hilgert amendment. Senator Bohlke.

SENATOR BOHLKE: Thank you, Madam President and members. Back when we did welfare reform, I was the sponsor of that bill. But I would also like to tell you that I introduced a bill very similar to Senator Hilgert's this year. I hate to admit that Senator Hilgert's was drafted a little better, (laugh) by my fault, not anyone on my staff. But the way we had it, it just didn't work, but it got at the very same issue. It's one that I think is important, that seems to make sense to me, and as we have looked at early child care and brain development and everything that we've looked at recently, the importance of bonding, especially in that first year, is so tremendously important that if we can increase that possibility for children and babies, infants to be with their mothers, I think we've done a great deal of good. In fact, one of my seatmates said, why wouldn't we just do this bill? It's, I think, a significant amendment, I believe an important one, and from all that I've been able to learn in recent years, especially the new information from the medical community on the importance of